Control of Presidential Papers Backed

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Associated Press

A House committee approved a bill yesterday giving the government control of White House papers but permitting a president to seal some records for up to 10 years.

The Government Operations Committee approved 33 to 2 the bill which would require outgoing presidents, beginning in 1981, to turn over all official White House records to the National Archives. Currently, a president's official records are regarded as his own property.

However, a president would be empowered to restrict access—for up to 10 years—to classified documents or material regarding national defense, foreign policy, appointments, trade secrets, advice from aides and personnel and medical files.

Private records such as journals or diaries would remain the president's property.

The bill also would permit a president in office to dispose of records with no historical or administrative value, provided he notified the archivist and gave Congress 60 days' notice.

Rep. Ted Weiss (D-N.Y.), who proposed that Congress have power to block disposal of records, said that although his amendment was rejected, he and Rep. Elliott Levitas (D-Ga.) will offer the same porposal when the bill reaches the House floor.